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لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

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SUFI M. R. BENGALIEE

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## **The Ahmadiyya Movement**

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and the expected Messenger of all nations. In the spirit and power of all the earlier prophets, he came to serve and re-interpret the final and eternal teaching laid down by God in the Holy Quran. The Movement therefore represents the *True and Real Islam* and seeks to uplift humanity and to establish peace throughout the world. Hazrat Ahmad died in 1908, and the present Head of the Movement is his second successor, Hazrat Mirza Bashirud-Din Mahmud Ahmad under whose directions the Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world, the following being the addresses of some of them:

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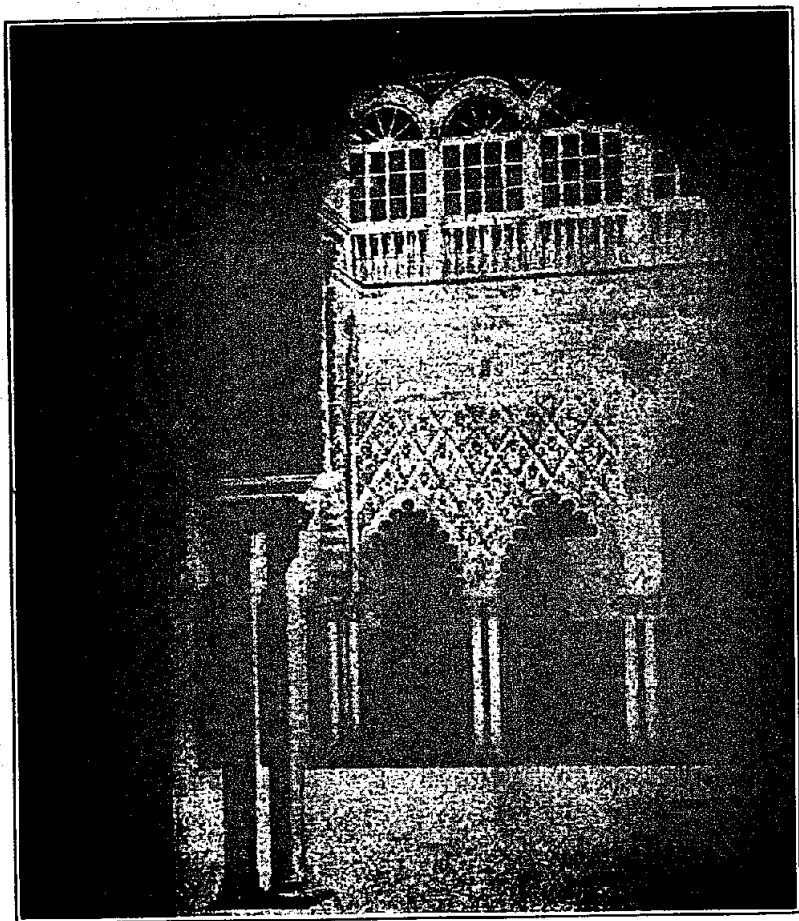
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# Alcazar Palace of Seville

(Spain)



*A masterpiece of architecture, built by Moslem architects and craftsmen for the Christian king, Peter the Cruel of Castile, in the fourteenth century.*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْاِسْلَامُ

## A Small Chapter From The Holy Quran

### The Chapter Al-Kawthar

Transliteration

Bismillaahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem

Innaa a'tainaaka al-kawthar

Fa-salli li-Rabbika wan-har

Inna shaania-ka hua-al-abtar.

(CVIII)

Translation

Verily, We have given thee abundance

So, pray unto thy Lord and sacrifice

Verily, it is thy enemy who is cut off (from good).

(CVIII).

من احاديث الرسول

## The Sayings Of The Master Prophet Muhammad

Mughierah-Ibn-Shu'bah relates: "A solar eclipse took place on the day when the Holy Prophet's son Ibrahim died, and people ascribed it to his death. When the Holy Prophet heard this he said: 'The sun and the moon do not go into eclipse for any one's death or life. These are the signs of God. When you witness them occur, stand up in prayer to beseech God's mercy and grace.'" (Bukhari)

Mu'awia reports that he heard the Holy Prophet saying: "When God wills to do good to any person, He gives him a taste and an insight into spiritual matters. As for me, I am only the distributor; the Almighty God is the real Giver of good. My followers shall remain firm in the commandments of God, and no one will be able to do them any harm until the appointed time comes." (Bukhari)

It is related from Abu Hurairah that the Holy Prophet said: "Charity never reduces wealth; God always increases the honor of the man who forgives other peoples' faults; and God ever raises the person who adopts humbleness for His sake." (Muslim)

Ibn Omar relates that the Holy Prophet said: "O ye people turn to God, the Exalted, I turn to Him a hundred times every day." (Muslim)

Shaddad Ibn Aus reports that the Holy Prophet said: "Wise is he who takes account of himself and works for the next world; and a loser is he who follows his own evil inclinations and then trusts in God's mercy." (Tirmidhi)

Abud-Darda relates that the Holy Prophet said: "Search me among the weak. There is no doubt that you are helped and given sustenance on account of the weak." (Abu Daud)

# Excerpts From The Writings

of

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmed  
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi  
(1836-1908)

## THE OBJECT OF MAN'S LIFE IN THIS WORLD AND THE MEANS OF ITS ATTAINMENT

It is needless to say that different men have, on account of their superficial views or narrow-mindedness, set before themselves different objects generally limited to a gratification of the low desires and pleasures of this world. But Almighty God has in His Holy Word declared a higher aim of man's existence. Thus the Holy Quran says: *'I have not created the jinn and the men but that they should know Me and worship Me'* (LI:56).

The real object of man's life according to the Holy Quran, is therefore, only a true knowledge and worship of God and a total resignation to His will so that whatever is said or done is said or done for His sake only. One thing, at least, is plain and that is that man has no choice in the matter of fixing the aim of his life. He does not enter the world or leave it as he desires. He is a creature and the Creator who has brought him into existence and bestowed upon him higher and more excellent faculties than upon other animals has also assigned an object to his existence. A man may or may not understand it or a hundred different motives may hold him back from it, but the truth is that the grand aim of man's life consists in knowing and worshipping God and living for His sake. Almighty God says in the Holy Quran: *'Verily the religion which gives a true knowledge of God and directs in the most excellent way of His worship is Islam'* (III:17). *'Islam responds to and supplies the demands of human nature and God has created man after the model of Islam and for*

*Islam, i. e.; He has willed it that man should devote his faculties to the love, obedience and worship of God. It is for this reason that Almighty God has granted him faculties which are suited for Islam' (XXX:29).*

We cannot enter into a detailed commentary of these verses here. Something has already been said in answer to the third part of the first question in connection with this point. We may here add a few remarks upon the wonderful aptitude of the faculties of man for Islam. The external and internal endowments of human nature give us clearly to understand that the highest object of their creation is the love and worship of God. True happiness, which is generally admitted to be the goal of life, is not attainable through the diverse pursuits which men follow but only through God. Not all the felicities which this world can bestow can afford a relief from the gnawing grief which attends a man's last moments upon this earth. The richest millionaire, the highest official, the most successful merchant, the greatest king or the wisest philosopher does not possess contentment of mind and departs from this world a prey to poignant regret. His heart upbraids him for his absorption in worldly cares and his conscience judges him guilty of the employment of deceit and unfair means to attain success in his worldly affairs.

Take the question in another light. In the case of the lower animals, we see that their faculties are so made as to render them unable to serve a higher purpose than a particular one and they cannot go beyond a certain limit. This leads us to the conclusion that the highest limit which the faculties of a particular animal can reach is also the highest aim of its creation. A bullock, for instance, may be used to furrow the ground or draw water or for loading but with its present faculties it can serve no higher purpose. This is, therefore, also the aim of its existence. Judging man in the same manner we find that of all the faculties which nature has bestowed upon him the highest is that which awakens him to a search after God and encourages him to the noble aspiration of losing his own self in the love of God and completely submitting himself to His will. In the requirements of his physical nature the lower animals are on a level with him. In art some animals display more skill than human beings.



Even the bee produces honey from the juice of flowers with such an exquisite skill that man has failed with all his genius to show anything like it. The perfection of man, therefore, does not consist in these matters but in something else. It consists in the excellence of his spirituality, in his union with God. The true object of his life in this world is, therefore, that the window of his heart should be opened towards God.

We are now in a position to answer the second part of the question, viz., how can this object be attained?

The first means to attain to this end is that in the recognition of God a man should tread upon the right path and have his faith in the true and living God. The goal can never be reached by the man who takes the first step in the wrong direction and looks upon some stone or creature or an element of nature as his Deity. The true God assists those who seek Him but a dead deity cannot assist its dead worshippers. Almighty God has well illustrated this in a parable: *'Prayer is rightly addressed only when it is to the true God for He has power over everything but the deities to whom people pray beside Him give them no answer at all. Their case is like that of the person who stretches forth his hands to the water and prays it to reach his mouth. Will it then reach his mouth? Not at all. Those who are ignorant of the true and living God pray in vain to their false deities and their prayers are in error'* (XIII:15).

The second means to attain the true object of life consists in being informed of the perfect beauty which the Divine Being possesses. Beauty naturally attracts the heart and incites love. The beauty of God consists in His unity, His majesty, His grandeur and His other lofty attributes. The Holy Quran draws attention to this point in the following well-known verses: *'God is alone in His person, attributes and glory and has no partner; all need His support, every single atom owes its existence to Him, He receives favour from none but bestows it upon all; He is neither a son nor a father; for there is none of His kind'* (CXII). The Holy Quran teems with verses declaring the omnipotence, majesty and glory of God. It presents a God Who attracts the heart on account of His beauty and majesty and rejects the dead, weak, unmerciful and powerless gods of false religions.

The third means of reaching the goal consists in realizing the great goodness of God. Beauty and goodness are the only two incentives to love. The attributes of God relating to goodness are described in the Fatiha. The Sura runs thus: *'All praise is due to God Who is the Creator, the nourisher and the supporter of all the worlds; His mercy and goodness are unbounded; He is the Lord of the day of judgment.'*

It is plain that the Divine Goodness could not be perfect unless He first brought everything into existence from nothing and then gave it sustenance under all circumstances and Himself supported it in its weakness. All kinds of His mercies should also have been brought into existence for His creatures and His goodness should not have had any limits set to it. To this perfect goodness, the Holy Quran has again and again drawn attention. Thus it says in one place: *'If you try to count the blessings and favours of God, you shall never be able to comprehend them'* (XIV:37).

The fourth means for the desired end is prayer. The Holy Quran says: *'Call upon Me and I shall answer your prayers'* (XL: 62). Frequent stress has been laid upon this point in the Holy Quran because man can reach God only with the assistance of God.

The fifth is mujahada, i. e., to seek God by spending one's riches, exerting one's whole power, sacrificing one's life and applying one's wisdom in the way of God. The Holy Quran says: *'Exert yourselves to the full in the way of God whether with your property or your lives or your persons with all their powers and faculties'* (IX: 41). *'Only they are successful who spend in the way of God of whatever We have given them as wisdom, knowledge, understanding, art etc.'* (11:2). *'And those who have made all sorts of efforts for Us. We shall surely guide in Our paths'* (XXXIX:69).

The sixth means by which a person may safely attain to the goal is perseverance, i. e., he should be indefatigable and untiring in the way in which he walks and unswerving under the hardest trials. As Almighty God says: *'Those who say: "Our Lord is Allah, the true God," and renounce the false deities and then show perseverance, i. e., remain faithful and constant under various trials and sufferings, the angels descend upon them and say: "Fear ye not, neither be ye*

*grieved, but rejoice and be happy that ye have become heirs to the bliss which had been promised to you; We are your guardians in this life and the next*" (XLI:30). In these verses we are informed that perseverance in faith brings about the pleasure of God. It is true that, as the proverb goes: 'Perseverance is more than a miracle.' The highest degree of perseverance is called forth when adversities encompass a man all around, when he is threatened with the loss of life, property and honour in the path of God and whatever is consoling or comforting forsakes him, so much so that even God tries him by closing the door of encouraging dreams, visions and revelations for a time, it is when a man is surrounded by these dreary sights and the last beam of hope passes away that perseverance must be shown. Under such ills and suffering a man must show firmness, not swerve from the line, hold on through fire and water, be willing to suffer every disgrace, wait for no help or support, not even seek any good tidings from Almighty God, and in spite of his helplessness and the absence of all comforting elements he must stand up firmly, submitting himself, sink or swim, to the heavenly will without wringing his hands or beating his breast. This is the true perseverance which reveals the glorious face of God. It is this noble quality which the dust of the apostles, prophets, the righteous and the faithful still exhales. Referring to this Almighty God directs the believers to pray to Him in the following words: '*O God! guide us in the path of perseverance, in the path by walking in which we may draw Thy favours and blessings and Thy pleasure upon us,*' and again: '*O Lord! Give us in this affliction the contentment of mind which may give us patience and ordain it that our death be upon Islam, i. e., total resignation to the will of God*' (VII:123).

It should be borne in mind that in afflictions and trials Almighty God causes a light to descend upon the hearts of His faithful servants, strengthened with which they meet the afflictions which calmness and quiet, and on account of the sweetness of their faith kiss the chains they are bound with for walking in the path of God. When the righteous servants of God are under hard trials and sufferings and see death face to face, they do not contend with their Lord to remove

their sufferings. They know that to pray to God to pass away the cup of their hard lot is opposing His will and not in accordance with a total resignation to it. The true lover does not recede but takes a forward step when he sees ills and adversities, and looking upon his own life as a very insignificant thing willingly submits himself to the will of heaven and is prepared to meet the worst. Of such people Almighty God says: *'The true lover of God sacrifices his own life in the way of God and receives the pleasure of God as its price: these are the people to whom God is particularly merciful'* (II:203). In short this is the essence of the constancy which leads to God.

The seventh means to attain the object is the company of the righteous and the imitation of their perfect models. It is really one of the greatest needs of the appearance of the prophets. Man is naturally inclined to imitate a model and feels the need of it. A perfect model infuses life into a man and invigorates him to act upon the principles of righteousness, while he who does not imitate a perfect model gradually loses all eagerness to do good and ultimately falls in error. To this end the Holy Quran says: *'Remain in the company of the righteous'* (IX:120). *'Walk in the paths of those whom God has blessed before you.'*

The eighth means is pure dreams, visions and revelations from God. As the road which leads to God is a secret and mysterious road and is full of difficulties and dangers, the spiritual wayfarer may, therefore, depart from the right course or despair of attaining the goal. The grace of God, therefore, continues to encourage and strengthen him in his spiritual journey with inspiring visions and revelations, gives him consolation in hours of grief and animates him with a still more zealous desire to pursue his journey eagerly. Such is the Divine Law with the wayfarers of His path that He continues to cheer their hearts every now and then with His Word and to reveal to them that He is with them. Thus strengthened they take this journey with great vigor. Thus He says in the Holy Quran: *'For them are good tidings in this world and in the next'* (X:65). The Holy Quran has described numerous other ways which assist us in reaching the goal of life but we cannot describe them here for want of space.

—The Teachings of Islam

## Al-Ghazzali

Imam Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazzali, the spiritual reformer of the fifth century of the Moslem era, was one of those great souls who left their indelible marks on the pages of history. The signal services which he rendered to the cause of Islam, and his lofty intellectual and spiritual attainments earned for him the titles of "Hujjat ul-Islam" or the "Proof of Islam" and "Zain ud-Din," "The Ornament of the Faith." One of his biographers says: "Ghazzali is an Imam by whose name breasts are dilated and souls are revived, and in whose literary productions the ink-horn exults and the paper quivers with joy; and at the hearing thereof voices are hushed and heads are bowed." Still another writer remarks: "Al-Ghazzali is one of the deepest thinkers, the greatest theologians and profoundest moralists of Islam. . . . Intimately acquainted with all the learning of his time, he was not only one of the numerous Oriental philosophers who traverse every sphere of intellectual activity, but also one of those rare minds whose originality is not crushed by their learning. He was imbued with a sacred enthusiasm for his faith, and his whole life was dedicated to one purpose, the defense of Islam."

In the following lines we will sketch a brief outline of the life of this remarkable figure.

The Imam Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazzali was born at Tus, in Khurasan, Persia in A. H. 450—A.D. 1058-1059 and was left an orphan at a comparatively early age. His father had two sons, Muhammad and Ahmad, whom he committed, on his death-bed, to the care of a pious Sufi friend of his, who educated them until the money left him by their father was spent. Then, for a while, they went to one of the colleges of their native city to learn Fiqh — Moslem Jurisprudence so that they might earn their livelihood. Later in life Al-Ghazzali remarked: "We sought knowledge for the sake of something other than God, but He refused that it should be for aught but Himself." Thereafter, he went to Jurjan and studied with the eminent teacher Abu Nasr Al-Isma'ili.

Al-Ghazzali's biographers tell us, an interesting story of that period of his life. While returning to Tus, after finishing his studies in Jurjan, he fell into the hands of highwaymen and was robbed of all his possessions, including a bag full of his lecture notes. That was beyond his endurance, so he followed the robbers and earnestly entreated them to return the bag. He said with his characteristic simplicity: "I left home for the sake of hearing them and writing them down and learning the knowledge in them." Thereupon the chief of the robbers laughed and said: "How dost thou profess to have learned the knowledge contained in them, for when we have taken them from thee, thou art knowledgeless." But he gave him the bag containing the notebooks. Al-Ghazzali did not rest until he had learned them thoroughly. He spent fully three years in committing them to memory, so that, should he again be robbed, he should not be left without knowledge. Al-Ghazzali says: "God sent this man to teach me a lesson."

Shortly after his return from Jurjan, Al-Ghazzali left Tus a second time, in quest of still higher knowledge, for Nishapur which was one of the greatest centers of learning at that time. There he continued his studies with great distinction, under Imam-Ul-Haramayn, the most celebrated savant of his day. Al-Ghazzali was not only a pupil, but also a teacher of his fellow-students and an author. Thus by his brilliant intellectual qualities, Al-Ghazzali earned a great reputation even in the life time of his redoubtable master who remarked about his three favourite pupils: "Al-Ghazzali is an ocean (of learning) to drown in, Al-Kiya is a tearing lion and Al-Khawafi is a burning fire." Later history proves that Al-Ghazzali was destined to leave not only his two comrades in learning behind but also his illustrious master in achievement and glory.

At the death of Imam-Ul-Haramayn, Al-Ghazzali left Nishapur and sought fortune and advancement in Baghdad. He presented himself to the court of Nizamul-Mulk, "Whose assembly was the alightingplace of the learned and the destination of the leading divines and savants, and there, due to his high merit, he enjoyed the society of the principal doctors, and disputed with opponents and rebutted them in spite of their eminence. So Nizamul-Mulk inclined to him and

showed him great honour." So outstanding were his attainments that he was appointed the professor in the Nizamiyya University, a position aspiring after which many highly renowned divines spent all their lives, but in vain. He held that office from A. H. 484-488. "Four years of teaching at the Nizamiyya placed Baghdad of the Seljuqs at his feet, scholars flocked to hear him and dignitaries courted his favour. His reputation spread far and wide across the world of Islam, and he earned the honorific titles of 'Imam ul-Khurasan' and 'Imam ul-Iraq.'"

But in spite of all this pomp and power with which Al-Ghazzali was surrounded, he was unhappy at the bottom of his heart. The deep spiritual hunger of his soul was not satisfied. His lofty spirit recoiled from the worldly gauds and vanities. He suffered from a spiritual travail which grew in intensity every day. At last he brought it to a calm and close by renouncing the world. He gave up all for God. At the height of his fame and success, in the year A. H. 488, he abandoned his position, appointed his brother professor in his place in the Nizamiyya and set out for a long sojourn. He gave himself entirely up to God and lived the life of a wayfarer in His path. Al-Ghazzali's abandonment of the world provides one of the most soul-stirring stories of man's search for God. He himself has described it masterfully in his well-known autobiography *Munquidh Mina-dh-Dhalaal*, 'Deliverer From Error,' which we quote below in parts:

Know then, my brothers (may God direct you in the right way), that the diversity in beliefs and religions, and the variety of doctrines and sects which divide men, are like a deep ocean strewn with shipwrecks, from which very few escape safe and sound. Each sect, it is true, believes itself in possession of the truth and of salvation; "each party" as the Koran saith, "rejoices in its own creed"; but as the chief of the apostles, whose word is always truthful, has told us, "My people will be divided into more than seventy sects, of whom only one would be saved." This prediction, like all others of the Prophet must be fulfilled.

From the period of adolescence, that is to say, previous to reaching my twentieth year to the present time when, I have passed my fiftieth, I have ventured into this vast ocean; I have fearlessly sounded its depths, and, like a resolute diver, I have penetrated its darkness and dared its dangers and abysses. I have interrogated the beliefs of each sect and scrutinized the mysteries of each doctrine, in order to disentangle truth from error and orthodoxy from heresy.

I have never met one who maintained the hidden meaning of the Koran without investigating the nature of his belief, nor a partisan of its exterior sense without inquiring into the results of his doctrine. There is no philosopher whose system I have not fathomed, nor theologian the intricacies of whose doctrine I have not followed out.

Sufism has no secrets into which I have not penetrated; the devout adorer of Deity has revealed to me the aim of his austerities; the atheist has not been able to conceal from me the real reason of his unbelief. The thirst for knowledge was innate in me from an early age; it was like a second nature implanted by God, without any will on my part. No sooner had I emerged from boyhood than I had already broken the fetters of tradition and freed myself from hereditary beliefs.

Having noticed how easily the children of Christians became Christians, and the children of Moslems embrace Islam, and remembering also the traditional saying ascribed to the Prophet, "Every child has in him the germ of Islam, then his parents make him Jew, Christian, or Zoroastrian," I was moved by a keen desire to learn what was the innate disposition in the child, the nature of the accidental beliefs imposed on him by the authority of his parents and his masters, and finally the unreasoned convictions which he derives from their instructions.

Struck with the contradictions which I encountered in endeavouring to disentangle the truth and falsehood of these opinions, I was led to make the following reflection: "The search after truth being the aim which I propose to myself, I ought in the first place to ascertain what are the bases of certitude." In the next place I recognized that certitude is the clear and complete knowledge of things, such knowledge as leaves no room for doubt nor possibility of error and conjecture, so that there remains no room in the mind for error to find an entrance. In such a case it is necessary that the mind, fortified against all possibility of going astray, should embrace such a strong conviction that, if, for example, anyone possessing the power of changing a stone into gold, or a stick into a serpent, should seek to shake the bases of this certitude, it would remain firm and immovable. Suppose, for instance, a man should come and say to me, who am firmly convinced that ten is more than three, "No; on the contrary, three is more than ten, and, to prove it, I change this rod into a serpent," and supposing that he actually did so, I should remain none the less convinced of the falsity of his assertion, and although his miracle might arouse my astonishment, it would not instil any doubt into my belief.

I then understood that all forms of knowledge which do not unite these conditions (imperviousness to doubt, etc.) do not deserve any confidence, because they are not beyond the reach of doubt, and what is not impregnable to doubt cannot constitute certitude.



I then examined what knowledge I possessed, and discovered that in none of it, with the exception of sense-perceptions and necessary principles, did I enjoy that degree of certitude which I have just described. I then sadly reflected as follows: "We cannot hope to find truth except in matters which carry their evidence in themselves — that is to say, in sense-perceptions and necessary principles; we must therefore establish these on a firm basis. Is my absolute confidence in sense-perceptions and on the infallibility of necessary principles analogous to the confidence which I formerly possessed in matters believed on the authority of others? Is it only analogous to the reliance most people place on their organs of vision, or is it rigorously true without admixture of illusion or doubt?"

I then set myself earnestly to examine the notions we derive from the evidence of the senses and from sight in order to see if they could be called in question. The result of a careful examination was that my confidence in them was shaken. Our sight for instance, perhaps the best practised of all our senses, observes a shadow, and finding it stationary pronounces it devoid of movement. Observation and experience, however, show subsequently that a shadow moves not suddenly, it is true, but gradually and imperceptibly, so that it is never really motionless.

Again, the eye sees a star and believes it as large as a piece of gold, but mathematical calculations prove, on the contrary, that it is larger than the earth. These notions, and all others which the senses declare true, are subsequently contradicted and convicted of falsity in an irrefragable manner by the verdict of reason.

Then I reflected in myself: "Since I cannot trust to the evidence of my senses, I must rely only on the intellectual notions based on fundamental principles, such as the following axioms: 'Ten is more than three. Affirmation and negation cannot coexist together. A thing cannot both be created and also existent from eternity, living and annihilated simultaneously, at once necessary and impossible.'" To this the notions I derived from my senses made the following objections: "Who can guarantee you that you can trust to the evidence of reason more than to that of the senses? You believed in our testimony till it was contradicted by the verdict of reason, otherwise you would have continued to believe it to this day. Well, perhaps, there is above reason another judge who, if he appeared, would convict reason of falsehood, just as reason has confuted us. And if such a third arbiter is not yet apparent, it does not follow that he does not exist."

To this argument I remained some time without reply; a reflection drawn from the phenomena of sleep deepened my doubt. "Do you not see," I reflected, "that while asleep you assume your dreams to be indisputably real? Once awake, you recognize them for what they are — baseless chimeras. Who can assure you, then, of the reliability of notions which, when awake, you derive

from the senses and from reason? In relation to your present state they may be real; but it is possible also that you may enter upon another state of being which will bear the same relation to your present state as this does to your condition when asleep. In that new sphere you will recognize that the conclusions of reason are only chimeras."

This possible condition is, perhaps, that which the Sufis call "ecstasy" ("hal"), that is to say, according to them, a state in which, absorbed in themselves and in the suspension of sense-perceptions, they have visions beyond the reach of intellect. Perhaps also Death is that state, according to that saying of the Prince of prophets: "Men are asleep; when they die, they wake." Our present life in relation to the future is perhaps only a dream, and man, once dead, will see things in direct opposition to those now before his eyes; he will then understand that word of the Koran, "Today we have removed the veil from thine eyes and thy sight is keen."

Such thoughts as these threatened to shake my reason, and I sought to find an escape from them. But how? In order to disentangle the knot of this difficulty, a proof was necessary. Now a proof must be based on primary assumptions, and it was precisely these of which I was in doubt. This unhappy state lasted two months, during which I was, not, it is true, explicitly or by profession, but morally and essentially a thorough-going sceptic.

God at last deigned to heal me of this mental malady; my mind recovered sanity and equilibrium, the primary assumptions of reason recovered with me all their stringency and force. I owed my deliverance, not to a concatenation of proofs and arguments, but to the light which God caused to penetrate into my heart — the light which illuminates the threshold of all knowledge. To suppose that certitude can be only based upon formal arguments is to limit the boundless mercy of God. Some one asked the Prophet the explanation of this passage in the Divine Book: "God opens to Islam the heart of him whom He chooses to direct." "That is spoken," replied the Prophet, "of the light which God sheds in the heart." "And how can man recognize that light?" he was asked. "By his detachment from this world of illusion and by a secret drawing towards the eternal world," the Prophet replied.

On another occasion he said: "God has created His creatures in darkness, and then has shed upon them His light." It is by the help of this light that the search for truth must be carried on. As by His mercy this light descends from time to time among men, we must ceaselessly be on the watch for it. This is also corroborated by another saying of the Apostle: "God sends upon you at certain times, breathings of His grace; be prepared for them."

My object in this account, is to make others understand with what earnestness we should search for truth, since it leads to results we never dreamt of." . . . . .

The researches to which I had devoted myself, the path which I had traversed in studying religious and speculative branches of knowledge, had given me a firm faith in three things — God, Inspiration, and the Last Judgment. These three fundamental articles of belief were confined in me, not merely by definite arguments, but by a chain of causes, circumstances, and proofs which it is impossible to recount. I saw that one can only hope for salvation by devotion and the conquest of one's passions, a procedure which presupposes renouncement and detachment from this world of falsehood in order to turn towards eternity and meditation on God. Finally I saw that the only condition of success was to sacrifice honours and riches and to sever the ties and attachments of worldly life.

Coming seriously to consider my state, I found myself bound down on all sides by these trammels. Examining my actions, the most fair-seeming of which were my lecturing and professional occupations, I found to my surprise that I was engrossed in several studies of little value, and profitless as regards my salvation. I probed the motives of my teachings and found that, in place of being sincerely consecrated to God, it was only actuated by a vain desire of honour and reputation. I perceived that I was on the edge of an abyss, and that without an immediate conversion I should be doomed to eternal fire. In these reflections I spent a long time. Still a prey to uncertainty, one day I decided to leave Bagdad and to give up everything; the next day I gave up my resolution. I advanced one step and immediately relapsed. In the morning I was sincerely resolved only to occupy myself with the future life; in the evening a crowd of carnal thoughts assailed and dispersed my resolutions. On the one side the world kept me bound to my post in the chains of covetousness, on the other side the voice of religion cried to me, "Up! Up! thy life is nearing its end, and thou hast a long journey to make. All thy pretended knowledge is nought but falsehood and fantasy. If thou dost not think now of thy salvation, when wilt thou think of it? If thou dost not break thy chains today, when wilt thou break them?" Then my resolve was strengthened, I wished to give up all and flee; but the Tempter, returning to the attack said, "You are suffering from a transitory feeling; don't give way to it, for it will soon pass. If you obey it, if you give up this fine position, this honourable post exempt from trouble and rivalry, this seat of authority safe from attack, you will regret it later on without being able to recover it."

Thus I remained, torn assunder by the opposite forces of earthly passions and religious aspirations, for about six months from the month of

Rajab of the year A.D. 1096. At the close of them my will yielded and I gave myself up to destiny. God caused an impediment to chain my tongue and prevented me from lecturing. Vainly I desired, in the interest of my pupils, to go on with my teaching, but my mouth became dumb. The silence to which I was condemned cast me into a violent despair; my stomach became weak; I lost all appetite; I could neither swallow a morsel of bread nor drink a drop of water.

The enfeeblement of my physical powers was such that the doctors, despairing of saving me, said, "The mischief is in the heart, and has communicated itself to the whole organism; there is no hope unless the cause of his grievous sadness be arrested."

Finally, conscious of my weakness and the prostration of my soul I took refuge in God as a man at the end of himself and without resources. "He who hears the wretched when they cry" (Koran, xxvii. 63) deigned to hear me; He made easy to me the sacrifice of honours, wealth, and family. I gave out publicly that I intended to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, while I secretly resolved to go to Syria, not wishing that the Caliph (may God magnify him) or my friends should know my intention of settling in that country. I made all kinds of clever excuses for leaving Bagdad with the fixed intention of not returning thither. The Imams of Irak criticised me with one accord. Not one of them could admit this sacrifice had a religious motive, because they considered my position as the highest attainable in the religious community. "Behold how far their knowledge goes!" (Koran, liii. 31). All kinds of explanations of my conduct were forthcoming. Those who were outside the limits of Irak attributed it to the fear with which the government inspired me. Those who were on the spot and saw how the authorities wished to detain me, their displeasure at my resolution and my refusal of their request, said to themselves, "It is a calamity which one can only impute to a fate which has befallen the Faithful and Learning!"

At last I left Bagdad, giving up all my fortune. Only, as lands and property in Irak can afford an endowment for pious purposes, I obtained a legal authorization to preserve as much as was necessary for my support and that of my children; for there is surely nothing more lawful in the world than that a learned man should provide sufficient to support his family. Then I betook myself to Syria, where I remained for two years, which I devoted to retirement, meditation, and devout exercises. I only thought of self-improvement and discipline and purification of the heart by prayer in going through the forms of devotion which the Sufis had taught me. I used to live a solitary life in the Mosque of Damascus, and was in the habit of spending my days on the minaret after closing the door behind me.

From thence I proceeded to Jerusalem, and every day secluded myself in the sanctuary of the Rock. After that I felt a desire to accomplish the Pilgrimage, and to receive a full effusion of grace by visiting Mecca, Medina, and the Tomb of the Prophet. After visiting the shrine of the Friend of God (Abraham), I went to the Hedjaz. Finally, the longings of my heart and the prayers of my children brought me back to my country, although I was so firmly resolved at first never to revisit it. At any rate I meant, if I did return, to live there solitary and in religious meditation; but events, family cares, and vicissitudes of life changed my resolutions and troubled my meditative calm. However irregular the intervals which I could give to devotional ecstasy, my confidence in it did not diminish; and the more I was diverted by hindrances, the more steadfastly I returned to it.\*

Al-Ghazzali wandered forth for about ten years in Syria, Palestine and Egypt, moving between Damascus, Jerusalem and Alexandria. He also performed the Pilgrimage and visited Hebron where the tomb of the patriarch Abraham is supposed to be situated. He devoted his time to prayer, fasting, contemplation of God and to writing. It is to this period that belongs the greater portion of his writings, including "Ihya-u Ulum ud-Din," "The Revival of the Sciences of Religions," which has immortalized his name. Toward the end of A. H. 499, he returned from his long sojourn and was prevailed upon to accept the post of professor in the university of Nizamiyya at Nishapur but ere long he resigned the post and came to his native city in Tus where he spent the remainder of his days until his death.

Al-Ghazzali died on Monday the 14th of Jamadi II, A. H. (Dec. III). His brother Ahmad gives the following account of his death: "On Monday, at dawn, my brother performed the ablution and prayed and then said, 'Bring me my grave clothes,' and he took them and kissed them and laid them on his eyes and said, 'I hear and obey to go in to the King.' And he stretched out his feet toward Mecca, and was taken to the good will of God Most High. He was buried at, or outside of Tabran, the citadel of Tus.

Al-Ghazzali holds a high position among the Moslem writers. His prolific pen left a large legacy. According to his biographers,

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\*Munqidh Mina-dh-Dhalaal, Deliverer From Error, translated by C. Field under title of The Confessions of Al-Ghazzali — pp. 12-19, 42-47.

he wrote no less than ninety-nine books; sixty-nine are still in existence. They embrace a wide range of subjects such as theology, philosophy, eschatology, mysticism, jurisprudence, ethics and canon law.

His writings raised a storm of opposition in certain quarters, especially in Spain. In Cordova, his celebrated "*Ihya-u Ulum ud-Din*" (The Revival of the Sciences of Religion) was committed to the flames and its possession was interdicted on pain of death or confiscation of property. Nevertheless, even during his lifetime his books were read from one end of the Moslem world to the other and he has been recognized as one of the authorities of Islam.

His greatest single work is the above mentioned "*Ihya*" which is a veritable Encyclopedia of Islamic ethics and theology. It is divided into four parts, each consisting of ten books. The First Part deals with Acts of Worship; the Second with the Usage of Life; the Third with the Destructive Matters of Life i. e. Vices; and the Fourth with Saving Matters of Life i. e. Virtues.

The "*Ihya*" was written in Arabic, and the author himself wrote an abridgement of it in Persian for popular use. It was entitled "*Kimiya'e Saadat*" (The Alchemy of Happiness), with which the readers of the Moslem Sunrise are familiar.

In his "*Maqasid ul-Falasifa*" (Aims of the Philosophers), Al-Ghazzali expounds in a systematic order the Aristotelian philosophy which was supreme in his day. The book was, however, a sort of introduction to its sequel, "*Tahafut ul-Falasifa*" (The Destruction of Philosophers) which exercised by far the greater influence. This latter work is a polemic in which the author criticizes the views of the philosophers and refutes them with extraordinary acumen. Finally, he builds up a system of positive truth to take the place of the errors of the philosophers in a third book, the *Qawa'id*. These three books follow and complement one another. Or we might say, they constitute three parts of the same book.

It is a matter of great interest that Al-Ghazzali's influence extended far beyond the walls of Islam. This illustrious follower of the Prophet Muhammad exerted far-reaching influence upon European thought. His works were partly translated into Latin before the middle of the twelfth century and later into Hebrew, French, German

and English. Raymund Martin, a contemporary of Thomas Aquinas who lived a century and a half after Al-Ghazzali, translated "*Tabaḥfut ul-Falasifa*" and incorporated a great deal of it in his "*Pugio Fidei*." Henceforward, Al-Ghazzali's arguments in favor of *creatio ex nihilo* (the world was created out of nothing) and his proofs that God's knowledge comprises particulars, as well as those of the resurrection of the dead, were employed by the Christian scholars in their own works.

It is an acknowledged fact that Thomas Aquinas was deeply indebted to the Moslems for his great works. He brought within the range of Christian thought a tremendous amount of valuable materials from the Islamic sciences. Among Al-Ghazzali's books, there was one dealing with the place of reason as applied to revelation. This treatise presents many parallels in its arguments and conclusions with the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas. Some of the questions on which Al-Ghazzali and Aquinas agree are the value of human reason in explaining and demonstrating the truth about the divine things; the ideas of contingency and necessity as demonstrating the existence of God; the unity of God as implied in His perfection; the possibility of beatific vision; the divine knowledge and the divine simplicity; the names of God; miracles as a testimony to the truth of the utterances of the prophets; and the resurrection of the dead. The *Summa* of Aquinas and the *Pugio* of Martin has a common origin in so far as they were written at the request of Raymund de Pinnaforte, General of the Dominican Order. The similarity in some chapters in both is suggestive, as has already been pointed out that Martin had incorporated a major portion of Al-Ghazzali's "*Tabaḥfut*" in his "*Pugio*."

Another source through which Thomas Aquinas gained access to Al-Ghazzali's writings was Maimonides who made use of "*Maquasid ul-Falasifa*" to a large extent and drew his Peripatetic theories from it.

Al-Ghazzali exerted still greater influence upon Judaism of the Middle Ages. Both the students and the adversaries of philosophy found rich materials in his works. He approached the ethical ideal of Judaism to such an extent that some supposed him to be actually

drifting in that direction. His works were eagerly studied and used by the Jewish writers. Abraham Ibn Ezra borrowed from Al-Ghazzali's *Mizan ul-Amal* his comparison between the limbs of the human body and the functionaries of a king and used it for the subject of his *Yeshene Leb*; and Abraham Ibn Dawud borrowed from the same book the parable used by Al-Ghazzali to prove the difference in the value between various branches of sciences; and Simon Duran cites in his *Keshet* a passage from the "*Mozena Ha'lyyunim*," which he calls "*Mozena ha-bokaniah*."

Al-Ghazzali's principal works began to be translated into Hebrew as early as the thirteenth century. Not less than eleven Hebrew commentaries of *Maquasid ul-Falasifa* are still to be found in European libraries.

The keynote of Al-Ghazzali's philosophy as is apparent from his life and works consists in his emphasis upon inward, moral transformation and personal experience. With him as with all true followers of Islam, life and doctrine is the same. Mere theoretical knowledge is of no avail in the realm of religion. It is utterly impossible for man to attain to the stage of certainty in matters spiritual, by scholastic philosophy or logical arguments or in a speculative manner. It is only by living a religious life that the divine realities can be realized. True religion which must be an experience of the soul, must manifest itself in works. Faith without works is a dead faith. He who possesses knowledge and acts accordingly shall be reckoned great in the kingdom of heaven. Thus we find him constantly laying stress on the importance of good works befitting knowledge:

"Be assured that knowledge does not strengthen the hand . . . . . Though a man read a hundred thousand scientific questions and understood them or learned them . . . . . they do not benefit them except by doing good deeds . . . . . knowledge is the tree, and working is its fruit; and though you studied a hundred years and assembled a thousand books, you would not be prepared for the mercy of Allah except by good deeds."—*Ayyu-bal-Walad*.

"Knowledge without work is insanity, and work without knowledge is vanity. Know that any science which does not remove you today from apostacy, and does not carry you today to obedience, will not remove you tomorrow from the fire of hell."—*Ayyu-bal-Walad*.



"Consecration to knowledge . . . . . wherein one would see God should be pursued with diligence, both outwardly and inwardly. Its outward sign is perseverance in good deeds, because he who thinks he can do without good deeds is a moral bankrupt. God besides Whom there is none worthy of worship said, "Say, O Muhammad to mankind, "if you love God, then follow me, God will love you.'"—*Al-Qawa'id ul-Asharab*.

## History of Christmas

No one knows on what day the Prince of Peace was born, nor in what month or year. This is Christmas in the year of our Lord 1944, but the date is wrong. St. Matthew says Jesus was born in the time of Herod the king, and Herod died about 3 B. C.

As far as the month is concerned, there is not one of the 12 which has not had its advocates.

Speculation on this subject did not arise for two centuries, because the early Christians thought it was sinful to keep the Lord's birthday "as if He were a king of Pharaoh."

April 19 and May 20 were among the first guesses, but they were specifically condemned by Clement of Alexandria as superstitions. He fixed the date as Nov. 17.

December was rejected at first, because it was not thought likely that Rome would order a census taken at the worst possible time for travel, or that the shepherds would be tending their flocks by night in such inclement weather.

"On this day," wrote St. Chrysostom, "the birthday of Christ was lately fixed at Rome in order that while the heathen were busy with their profane ceremonies the Christians might perform their sacred rites undisturbed."

This was the time of the joyous Roman Saturnalia. It was the day when the Prince of the Druids cut mistletoe from the sacred oaks at Stonehenge, and when the Scandinavians built their festival bonfires of yule logs.

Even the Christmas trees in our homes are said to be relics of the old heathen tree worship among Teutonic peoples, who had special ceremonies on this day.

The attempt to transform a pagan festival into a Christian one has never been completely successful, and the ambiguity has caused some trouble.

The Puritans passed a law abolishing Christmas because it was a pagan holiday, and in our time the Bolsheviks tried to abolish it because it was a religious holiday.

—*The Chicago Sun*

## Turkey and the Soviet Union

Sadak as well as Yalcin came to the conclusion that an alliance with the Soviet Union would be undesirable, but they wish for a continuation of the traditional friendly relations between Russia and Turkey.

What can be said about these relations and what remains of them after fluctuating Turkish policy of recent years? Russia was the first of the Great Powers to recognize Mustafa Kemal's New Turkey while it was still struggling for national existence. The Moscow Treaty of March, 1921 was a landmark in the struggle for a national freedom. A benevolent Russian neutrality and an absence of danger from the Soviet frontier were two indispensable conditions for Atatürk's government. Only so could it dare to undertake a war against international reactionaries and the armies of Greece supported by her Western Allies. The scaffolding of a close political co-operation was then erected. Soviet Russia felt herself isolated and on the defensive; Ankara dreaded some fresh move of Anglo-French imperialism. Mutual Assurances ceaselessly passed between Russia and Turkey that each saw in the unimpaired continuance of the other guarantees for its own safety. Russian experts had a leading part in the building up of the New Turkey. With their help Anatolia's important textile works in Kayseri were erected; these were the only foreign loans accepted by the cautious Turks in two decades. Soviet instructors rendered possible the up-to-date training of the Turkish air force. Personal contact was widened by the exchange of delegations. Voroshiov paid an official visit to Turkey. General İnönü, then Prime Minister, was numbered among the confessed admirers of Soviet Russia. He had seen it for himself.

In December, 1925 an agreement was concluded between the two republics, prohibiting participation in aggression, coalition alliances or hostile action of any kind directed against the other partner. In 1929 a very significant clause was added: Neither was permitted to assume obligations in regard to neighboring countries on land or sea without the assent of the other. The treaty was prolonged in its entirety on several occasions, and finally in 1936, however, came the

Montreux convention with regard to the Straits. The Turkish view was that Moscow's attitude marked a return to the traditional "*Mare Clausum*" principle of the Russian policy in the East. This led to some irritation; and Papen sought to reap the fruits of the mistrust that was sown at this time with his propaganda story about Stalin's ambitions regarding Istanbul and Dardanelles.

The position was this. Russia claimed to have rendered possible the birth of the New Turkey. Ankara had rendered valuable political services in return. For example, the recognition of the Bolshevik Russia by Rumania of Titulescu, at that time of material importance to Moscow, was brought about after long diplomatic preparation on the part of Dr. Aras. The strong influence exercised by cliques of Tsarist *emigres* prevented Yugoslavia from taking a similar step, but Ankara's active participation in the Balkan block, whose member states were Turkey, Greece, Rumania and Yugoslavia, resulted in general recognition that the real menace against which common measures of defense were needed, arose from the dynamically revisionist character of Bulgarian policy. The Balkan Entente did not become a *cordon sanitaire* as the enemies of the Soviet desired.

With the dismissal of Dr. Aras as Foreign Minister, Turkish relations with Soviet Union deteriorated visibly. The old pact of 1925 was, however, once more disintered in Ankara, when in 1940, Turkey ought to have given aid to her British ally during the Greek and Yugoslav war. At that time the Turks refused military assistance, "mainly because, in contradiction to the agreement of 1925, there was the danger of a conflict with Soviet Russia whose attitude is pro-German, or, at any rate, not clear." When, however, German-Turkish friendship pact was concluded only a few days before Hitler's attack on Russia, Moscow was stirred by bitter feelings toward Ankara, regarding the fact as an open breach of that traditional friendship which connected both countries despite the differences in their ideological outlook.

When Russia became the ally of Great Britain and America, the pretexts given by Turkey in 1940 having thus lost all pretence of meaning, Turkey still did not draw the conclusions and kept uneasily outside the conflict. She received Goebell's Red Bogy almost with

open arms. After the attack on Papen's life, which certain circles in Ankara tried to ascribe to Russia, Moscow was tempted to break off diplomatic relations with Turkey. Later when Inonu, faced by the changed relationships of power, behaved in a more polite manner towards Moscow, German propaganda tales, such as the "documentarily proved" Russian-British agreement according to which the Soviet Union was to receive Istanbul and the Dardenelles, were believed by many Turks. The fresh nightmare of a pan-Slav invasion of all non-Slav neighboring countries also found all too open ears. Indeed, in reaction, Turks even went so far as to undertake a kind of patronage of those quislings' governments whose hatred of the Russians is beyond doubt. It needed the gigantic Russian victories of recent months to wake at last some of the Turkish politicians from their disastrous isolationist illusions. The fact that Dr. Aras was made to launch that *ballon d'essai* is significant. This very statesman whom Germany tried to discredit in the Balkans as "handyman" for Soviet Russia is esteemed all the more in Moscow. His adversaries cash in on the fear of an active Turkish participation in the war, "which needs must follow an alliance with Russia." This only demonstrates the general desire for peace which so far nothing has been able to shake.

Bey Sertel, Editor of *Tan*, who had never given up his pro-Russian attitude in spite of all official exterior fluctuations, and who naturally sided with Dr. Aras, questions this thesis, pointing out that the Soviet-Czechoslovakian pact, too, has no aggressive tendencies. Pursuing Dr. Aras's suggestions, Sertel advocates a direct alliance not only with Soviet Union but also with the United States, "since it is impracticable to accept the help of Great Britain as Turkey's only ally, in all negotiations with these two powers." In the polemics following his first declarations Aras himself remains behind the scenes, having Sertel to explain his ideas. Nevertheless, he cannot avoid being asked by *Vakit*, a none too agreeable paper the unfair question whether he has reserved for himself the vacant post of Foreign Secretary. In the Turkish interest it is to be hoped that the irony of *Vakit* will become a reality. Not until the Russians see Turkish foreign policy again in the hands of a personality so reliable and from their viewpoint so frequently tested as Dr. Aras would they be ready

for an alliance guaranteed by him and therefore sincere. How many difficulties are still in the way of an ultimate change of mind of Turkey towards Russia has been shown in this article in presenting contrasting opinions. There is, however, still some hope left that late in the twelfth hour Sertel's hour demanding an alliance may be generally accepted as the conclusion he draws from this demand: "So long as Turkey and Soviet Union stand together nobody will be able to do much harm to the tranquility of both countries."

A. J. Fischer—*Contemporary Review*.

### BEFORE HITLER TOOK OVER

A new Hungarian ambassador presented his credentials to the President of a South American state.

"What country do you represent?" asked the President.

"The Kingdom of Hungary."

"Oh, so you have a king?"

"No, we are ruled by Admiral Horthy."

"An admiral? So you have a fleet?"

"No. We have no fleet."

"I see. And is your country neutral?"

"No, Your Excellency. We are at war with Russia."

"I see. Why, may I ask?"

"Because, Your Excellency, we want Transylvania."

"Oh. And Russia has Transylvania?"

"No, Rumania has Transylvania."

"So, then, you are at war with Rumania, too?"

"No, Your Excellency, Rumania is our ally."

The President picked up his telephone. His expression was set, his voice tense. "Get me the lunatic asylum."

—The *Evening Standard*, London

### WHO SEEK A STAR

*Men do not touch a star*

*In the mud that mirrors a stream*

*The stars are reached by men, who singing*

*Climb the ladder of a dream!*

Inez Clark Thorson—*American Mercury*

# Facts and Forces

## The Economic Potentiality of India

In the first place, India's natural resources are exceeded in size and variety only by those of the United States and the Soviet Union. Her mineral resources include one of the largest high-grade iron ore fields in the world, with an estimated total nearly 30,000,000 averaging 64 per cent iron content. She is the world's largest producer of mica and ilmenite, possesses the second largest reserves of manganese, 49 per cent of the world's bauxite, and rich deposits of chrome, magnesite, sulphur, graphite, gold, etc. Estimates of Indian coal reserves range from 36,000,000,000 to 60,000,000,000 tons, although the proportion of high-grade coal is said to be comparatively small. This deficiency is more than offset, however, by her immense potential of hydro-electric power resources, which are estimated reserve of 3,000,000,000 tons horsepower, second only to those of the United States.

Like the United States, India is also capable of providing a strong agricultural base for her industrial structure. Even under her present backward and oppressive agrarian system, India ranks among the world's leading agricultural nations. Jute is a virtual Indian monopoly, and before the war India ranked first in the production of tobacco, sugar, and oil seeds. She is the second largest producer of cotton, rice, and tea, and among the leading producers of wheat, barley, hemp, rubber, lac, and silk. She is also the largest producer and exporter of hides and skins tanned and untanned.

Thus India is potentially capable of supporting both light and heavy industries on the basis of her own natural resources, as well as maintaining an ample volume of agricultural production to feed her people and to supply raw material for industry and export. Furthermore, India possesses a vast supply of labor power, with a heritage of skilled craftsmanship dating back to the days when India was one of the leading manufacturing countries of the world. It is sometimes forgotten that it was the lure of India's wealth in manufactured goods—not raw materials—that first attracted European traders to her shores. For centuries before the British conquest of the country, Indian silks, cotton textiles, metal manufactures and woodwork were known and prized throughout the world. Because of the backwardness of Indian industry in the modern period, comparatively few Indians have had the opportunity to learn the mechanical and technical skills needed to operate modern machinery. But American engineers and supervisors who have cooperated in the development of some of India's few modern industries, such as the Tata iron and steel plant, attest to the fact that Indians respond quickly to technical training, and not only

the workers, but the engineers, chemists, and technicians are the equal of any in the world. The American Technical Mission that visited India in the spring of 1942 stated in its preliminary report that: "The Mission has been impressed with the good quality and excellent potentiality of Indian labor. The Indian is skilful with his hands, and given satisfactory working conditions and security of employment, is dependable and industrious."\*—*Digest and Review*.

## Religion in America

Churches go on talking as though most folks paid serious attention to them. They must think that this is true. It is not true. Less than half the people in the United States have even a nominal membership in any church. Of those who do belong, only about one-third go to church on any given Sunday—one in six of the whole population.

I should like to see the churches face the fact that, to the average citizen and his wife and his up-growing sons and daughters, organized Christianity no longer seems to matter much as a vital force in American life.

If the churches are really under the impression that they have much hold on the rank and file of Americans, let them consult the chaplains in the Army, Navy and Marines. There are a few chaplains—it is true—who tell tall tales of religious enthusiasm among the men, though even they rarely claim that there is visible or audible much of any love for the churches as such. But most chaplains are disillusioned. They are like those in one large group of educated and highly placed padres, in the forces, who wrote recently to their friends a round-robin letter which said, in part, "We are shocked by the almost complete lack of interest in Christ or Christianity which we observe in the men and women to whom we minister. . . . They are not anti-religious. They simply do not care or know what Christianity or any other religion is or teaches."

As for what the churches think and say, what influence does that have on the handling of American politics, the conduct of American education, the regulation of marriage and divorce, or on sex and drink, on how industrial disputes are settled, or how we carry on business?

As a plain matter of fact, religion in this country is generally regarded as a tolerated pastime for such people as happen to like to indulge in occasional godly exercises. I should like to see the churches recognize that they have been pushed into the realm of the non-essentials, and to persuade them to fight like fury for the right and the duty to bring every act of America and Americans before the bar of God's judgment.

The leaders of both Catholicism and Protestantism—it is true—are making valiant claim to such a right and duty. But the great mass of church members are content to regard the churches as private culture clubs, nice for christenings,

weddings and funerals. Most church members readily agree with the un-churched majority that it is not the proper business of the churches to criticize America or Americans, even though anyone with eyes can see that the country and its people are living increasingly a self-seeking and lawless life. Our free institutions are in danger and, as citizens, we grow less and less competent to put the general welfare ahead of individual and class cupidity.

I should like either to see the rank and file of alleged church-men wake up and fight for God in this pagan country, or else to see leaders disregard their timid followers and go out of the church buildings, shake off the dust of denominationalism from impatient feet, and appeal to the people generally. Americans will listen to religion if and when it claims to have relationship to real life.

In the second place, I should like to see the churches do more teaching and indulge themselves in less oratory and self-centered activity.

Here in America we have too long believed that this world is all the world there is, and that the only goods worth working for are things, money, amusements, excitements, applause and worldly power. We have come to put our trust for future welfare chiefly in a multitude of gadgets, physical and political. Thousands are being awakened by the war. There are already plenty of people, and there will be more, who want to learn about a way of life which is not that of mere producers, consumers and cannon-fodder.

They want to be taught—and they want their children taught—a religious way of life. But the churches do not teach them, not in terms that seem real. Catechisms and Sunday Schools of the various communions are dwindling with a rapidity that scares the church authorities. No wonder they melt away, for the teaching in them, with rare exceptions, is unbelievably vague, scrappy, futile. Children are asked to memorize teachings in outworn language forms, not tied up with daily activities; or else they are given snippets from the Bible, mostly having no religious significance. They get a picture of Jesus as a long-haired utterer of platitudes, instead of as a basic revolutionist with a timeless message for the strong and comfort for the weak.

The churches do not teach the children. As for *adult* religious education, there is not one American parish in a thousand that has any of it, except for what is injected in a sermon once in a while. We are a nation of religious illiterates. I should like to see every local congregation reorganize itself in such a way that teaching is the thing around which all else revolves.

Lastly I wish the postwar churches would relearn what they have too much forgotten; namely, how to worship God in spirit and in truth. One often gets the impression that neither pastor nor people really believe in God; if they did, there would be more humility, a greater awe, a more simple adoration. The average church service is not religious enough—is scarcely religious at all.

The existing churches may continue to deteriorate until they have become



a laughing stock of angels and of men, but the Church of God cannot be stopped. Why? Because men need God and because God's love for them is inexhaustible.—Bernard Iddings Bell—*Everybody's Digest*.

## Peasant Life in Afghanistan

Sprawled across the huge Asiatic mountain ranges, the kingdom of Afghanistan occupies an area of over a quarter of a million square miles; wedged between India and Russia, with Iran to the west, twelve million Afghans live on the roof of the world, for the average height of the country is over four thousand feet. For all our mountains, we have many fertile valleys, and Afghanistan is preponderantly an agricultural and pastoral region. For the same reason, the peasant farmers nearly all practise mixed farming, rearing horses and fat-tailed sheep as well as sowing their crops of wheat, barley, cotton and sugar-cane; silk-worms are also kept.

In order, however, to understand life in rural Afghanistan, it is necessary to realize a fundamental difference between the Afghan farmer and, for instance, his Indian neighbours: we have no landless peasantry. Each farm is run by the peasant and his sons and women-folk. No outsiders are employed, for the reason that there are no "farm hands" needing work; they either have their own homesteads or they labour for their own families. A farmhouse is usually somewhat larger than that of a European peasant, having from five to fifteen rooms. The building has a courtyard and an orchard, and this whole area is surrounded by a stone wall. Taxes are levied according to the profits of each season, there being no equivalent to the permanent settlement system of India, where the levy is fixed for a fifteen to twenty-five year period.

Under the Government Five-Year Plans for agriculture and industry, tractors and other machines are hired to the peasants, and their produce may be bought by the *sharkats* or joint-stock companies, which arrange for their marketing at home or abroad, or for their conversion into manufactured goods in the factories under their control. There are several of these companies, including the tobacco company, a textile company, and silk, fruit and skins companies.

Irrigation, as in many other Asiatic countries, is of great importance to us. Dams have been built, to conserve the water of the rushing mountain streams and to provide hydro-electric power, but in many parts, notably in the east and west, the ancient system called *kariz* is used. Wells are dug in a straight line down a gentle slope, and then connected by underground tunnels; the result is a steady stream of water through the channels feeding the fields. This method is often used in terrace cultivation of the hillsides.

Apart from the crops already mentioned, the most important are tobacco, opium and pulse, as well as walnuts and *chilghoza*, or pine-kernels. Efforts are being made to introduce citrus fruits and other new crops. At Baghlan, the

sugar-beet factory set up in 1939 has increased its yield yearly until now it supplies almost the whole national sugar deficit. A great deal of fruit is eaten in and exported from Afghanistan. Melons, apricots, mulberries, apples and grapes all flourish. Practically everyone in the country has an orchard. The Ministry of Agriculture sends its experts about and also does work in its laboratories. In this direction much has been done lately to improve the skins of the famous Karakul lamb. The Afghan Astrakhan fur comes from stillborn or unborn lambs, for only these have the tiny tight curls that give the skin its value.

In his food and clothing the peasant has modest tastes. There is no abject poverty, two crops a year in the rich loam soil providing quite a comfortable living for an average family. As often as not in winter the worker has a fur coat—an embroidered *postin*, with the fur inside, for skins are cheap. He has long, felt-lined leather boots, wears a turban, sandals, and a shirt, *kamirband*, and embroidered waistcoat and baggy trousers. For his morning meal he has *halim*, which is much like porridge, with leavened bread, washed down by innumerable cups of tea. His midday meal is frugal. Being a pious Muslim, he says his prayer, eats his cheese and dried fruit, and may drink a cup of green tea. At sundown, when his labour is finished, he returns home, offers his sunset prayer, and gathers his family round him for the main meal of the day. This is substantial—roast meat, rice, bread, some curd, and a sweet dish.

Traditionally conservative, devout in his practice of Islam, he works hard, pays his taxes to the Government without demur, and desires only to live his life in the God-gifted kingdom of Afghanistan. He is not fond of strangers, but if a traveller comes to his door for shelter, the peasant's house is his. His business and destination are not asked: he is welcomed and entertained as well as possible, for the laws of hospitality are sacred. If the guest seeks his protection he will invariably support him to the utmost of his ability: that is his tradition.—Edris Ali Shah—*The Synopsis*.

## SONG OF HOPE

By Archibald Rutledge

O gallant Heart, defeated,  
Now gazing toward the west,  
Where this day's splendor crumbles,  
Disastrous and unblest,  
Look, till the deathlike darkness  
By stars be glorified,  
Until you see another dream  
Beyond the dream that died.

—The Saturday Evening Post

# World Troubles and the Way Out

The world has waxed full of sin, and rebellion and transgressions abound and God's wrath is kindled. He will now reveal His face and will compel the world into submission.

The world has denied Him and has persisted in its denial, has dishonored His word, and has forgotten the day of His meeting, has mocked the day of Judgment. The rust of materialism has eaten into the souls of men, and they imagine that the prophets of God were men who possessed persuasive tongues and invented systems of religion to keep men within bounds; and they imagine that they can presume to teach God and rule over His word.

Extravagance has increased and the love of the world has captured the hearts of men. Man is being associated with God as His partner . . . Millions are being spent to induce men to renounce the worship of ONE TRUE GOD.

God bore all this with patience and when men refused to pay attention to His revealed word, He sent His Promised Messenger in order to win men back to God, and he showed sign after sign and miracle after miracle and with untiring patience and love, he called men to the ways of peace, and on their persisting in the ways, he warned them saying:

"O Europe! Thou art not secure, nor art thou O Asia! and ye that dwell in islands, no self-made deity shall save you.

"I see cities falling and towns in ruins. Foul deeds have been done in God's sight, and He has remained silent for a time, and He will now reveal His face and will strike terror in the hearts of men. Let him who hath ears hear, for the hour is nigh.

"I have striven to gather you under the wings of God's peace but the decrees of fate are inevitable.

"Verily, I say unto you that the turn of this country is approaching. Ye shall behold the age of Noah and witness the day of Lot.

But God is slow in His wrath: repent that ye may be forgiven. He who forsakes God is a worm and not a man, he is dead and not living."

—Hazrat Ahmad.

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